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ABSTRACT

This report discusses procedures for nationwide negotiation of teacher salaries in six European countries and considers possible applications of these procedures to negotiations on a Statewide level in the United States. Distinct negotiation patterns in the European countries fall into two categories: (1) with slight variations, that common to England, France, and Scotland; and (2) that found in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. These patterns, together with country-to-country variations, are described in detail. (JF)

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Centralized Negotiations for Teachers' Salaries
Implications for the United States

LeRoy J. Peterson

Due to my background of activities in the Wisconsin Education Association and the National Education Association, I have kept close to negotiation procedures and practices in teachers' salaries as seen from the teachers' point of view. In my capacity as professor of educational administration at The University of Wisconsin, with many of my students, administrators and potential administrators in public and private schools, I have viewed negotiations as seen from the point of view of school administrators. Analyzing negotiations from either vantage point, I haven't liked what I have seen. From salary negotiations as carried on in the public schools of Wisconsin and elsewhere, I have seen antagonisms and bitterness develop in both teachers and administrators. The position of the principal has been particularly difficult. He served on the management team in negotiations and regardless of how bitter the negotiations were, he was expected to work closely with the teachers in a spirit of cooperation during negotiations and after the

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negotiations were concluded. This often proved impossible and the high morale of a staff in pre-negotiation periods often was cut to shreds by negotiations and, in many cases, was impossible to reestablish. In some situations, the superintendent was a man without a portfolio. State statutes authorized or implied direct negotiation of the teacher with the board of education. In many instances, the superintendent served as a resource person for the board. If he advised against the teacher's demands, he was an S.O.B. as far as the teachers were concerned. If he advised against the board's proposals, he was ignoring his obligations in the eyes of the board. Since his reemployment was by the board, at their pleasure he tended to advise for and defend the board's position - whether justifiable or not. Often the attitude of the teachers was that he was a traitor to the cause of education. Legally the superintendent was always considered a member of the management team which early alienated him from the teachers. In many communities a cordial relationship between the superintendent and the teacher was difficult to maintain and in the most trying situations the superintendent was largely ignored by the teachers in all educational matters

after contracts were settled. In some instances he was hated with a vengeance by the teaching staff for his role in negotiation. Nor was he more than tolerated by the community which often felt he had done a poor job, not holding the budget at a reasonable level. Often, too, the irritation with the increased property tax load was viewed as the superintendent's personal negligence in the business operation of the school.

Not uncommonly, the militancy of the teacher negotiators and their organizational representations from the state and national level created major friction in the communities. Teachers who had previously been well regarded and liked in the community became persons-non-gratis. They were no longer invited to bridge parties, on hunting trips and to social activities in the homes of the community. They frequently felt ill at ease in the presence of taxpayers and community groups. While these feelings were more pronounced in smaller communities, of which Wisconsin has a large number, it also was evident in many larger communities that the teachers had used up all their good will as far as the people in the local community were concerned.

Viewing the many faceted problem of negotiation of teachers' salaries from the point of view of both teachers and administrators, the obvious conclusion ~~to me~~ was that there must be a better way. Knowing that European Countries generally negotiated teachers' salaries centrally (on a nation-wide basis), I arranged to study the procedures and practices in six countries during the second semester of last year to identify possibilities for states in the United States. The countries in which salary negotiations were studied were Denmark, England, France, Norway, Scotland and Sweden. The pattern was very similar in all Scandinavian Countries. It was distinctly different from the Scandinavian Countries in England, France, and Scotland. However, the pattern was quite similar in the last three-mentioned countries. Thus, two distinct patterns of negotiations appeared to emerge from the study. I shall describe these patterns after explaining the procedures and sources used in collection of data.

The procedure in collecting information was to interview the following people in each country:

1. The Executive Secretary (or Secretaries) of the National Association(s) of Teachers.

2. The Executive Secreatary of the National Association of School Boards or the equivalent organization (where appropriate).

3. The Ministry or Ministries most directly involved in negotiation of teachers' salaries. These usually included personnel from the 1) Ministry of Education, 2) the Ministry of Pensions (or Prices) and Wages and 3) the Ministry of Finance, Division of the Budget.

In all instances, the persons interviewed agreed that it was desirable to involve the ministries in negotiations although there was substantial differences of opinion as to the amount of authority the ministries should have in the negotiation process. The teachers thought they should have very little authority since they generally supported the position of the school board. The school boards were of the opinion that they should have considerable authority since in most instances the central government provided most of the funds for teachers' salaries. While the amount provided from the federal treasury varied by countries and districts it was commonly 65

percent or more of the total salary costs.

In consideration of centralized negotiation, I first will describe the negotiation pattern in England, France, and Scotland and then the pattern of the Scandinavian Countries. In describing the pattern of negotiation in England, France and Scotland, it appears most practical to describe it in England and to note the minor differences in other countries. England has had a long history of salary negotiations, some aspects dating back to World War I. There is more than one teachers' organization, although one has most of the teachers in membership and a fair share of the administrative memberships. All organizations of teachers and administrators, as described by educational function, are on the teachers' side of the bargaining table. Thus, teachers and administrators are working together for the common cause of better salaries for educational personnel.

Both the equivalent of our National Association of School Boards and the National Association of Education Committees (who do not employ the teachers) function on the management side. In addition, a representative of the Secretary of State's (for education) office and a representative of the Ministry of Education serve as resource persons and as the secretariat

of the negotiation personnel. The teachers' organizations have the responsibility of setting forth their demands and the management side has the responsibility of responding, setting forth their proposals. From that point on they bargain back and forth with proposals and counter-proposals. The bargaining may be not only on salaries and fringe benefits but also on a complete restructuring of the salary scales, with changed salaries for the different types of positions as was the case in early 1971.

When no more progress in bargaining seems possible, the representative of the Secretary of State (for education) may be asked by either side to provide for arbitration. If the other side agrees, arbitration is provided. If it doesn't, the Secretary of State (for education) must make the decision on whether to submit the unsolved questions to arbitration. Arbitration is binding except that the parties may ask that the questions under consideration be returned to them for further consideration at any time.

The function of arbitration is slightly different in England than in the United States. In England there is no obligation or even expectation that the arbitrator will find a "middle ground" between the proposals of

the parties. It is rather the responsibility of the arbitrator to determine what is a fair and just settlement. This may be a higher amount than the teachers would have settled for or it may be less than the school boards have offered. In actual practice, it is generally close to the maximum amount the school boards would have settled for but not necessarily so. Since neither party is bound or expected to accept in arbitration what it has offered to settle for prior to arbitration, each party appears willing to make its best offer in the negotiation process. This permits settlements in most instances.

While a nationwide salary schedule is in operation there is an adjustment for the higher cost of living in the greater London area. Here there is an adjustment for the larger cities and the more remote areas in Scotland, must have its negotiated settlement approved by governmental authorities in London and be in line with the settlement in England.

In France the system is much more informal. Relatively little of the negotiation procedures is set forth in statutes and negotiations are carried on intermittently, often under strike potentials. Strikes, when

called, usually last only a few days and teachers go back to work even though there is no settlement of the wage dispute. There is, however, usually a promise by government to provide more money or to do something about teachers' salaries or fringe benefits. Neither France, England, or Scotland have a strike fund of any consequence; thus the threat of a nationwide strike, although legal, is minimal. When strikes appear desirable to publicize the teachers' situation, selective strikes are called with teachers in one, two, or three communities going out on strike. They seldom remain on strike longer than a few days and return ~~ghostly~~ even though the issues are not resolved.

In describing the pattern of negotiations in the Scandinavian Countries, I will describe the pattern in Denmark which is essentially comparable to that in Norway and Sweden. Such differences as exist are not substantial and knowledge of them is important only in securing a detailed rather than a general picture of centralized negotiations of teachers' salaries.

Before description of the negotiation process in Denmark, I would like to make a few observations:

1. The Ministry of Education does not appear to hold a position of prestige in the federal government. The offices I visited were small; there is virtually no secretarial service and even very high ranking officials answer their own phones. When the phone calls are too distracting, the phone was simply disconnected by the official.

2. Salary negotiations are complicated by the geographical aspects of the district system. Elementary, high and vocational schools serving the same community do not have coterminous boundaries. As a result the fringe benefits granted by the local district, which in some cases are considerable, vary by districts even within the same community.

3. Salary negotiations are of recent origin. While there was some early outward appearance of salary negotiations, which were legally started in 1965 for practical purposes, Parliament determined salaries of teachers and other employees until 1969.

4. Teachers do not negotiate as one group. Each teaching level negotiates along with other civil servants in the same general qualification range. Thus the elementary teachers are members of a group of

comparably qualified civil servants, the secondary teachers and teachers college staff are members of another group and college and university staff still another group.

5. On a direct comparison of salaries of Danish teachers with teachers in the United States, the Danish teachers appear poorly paid. However, in terms of their standard of living and social status, this is not true. The apparent discrepancy is found in that Danish teachers are not required to purchase many items purchased by American teachers. Because of the provision of governmental medical services, Danish teachers have no expenditures for this purpose. The same is true for dental costs. Unemployment and disability and personally-paid insurance are not purchased since governmental support is provided in these instances. Homes for the aged are provided for all and college education is provided free to qualified candidates.

6. The Ministry of Education has little responsibility for negotiation of salaries for teachers. However, ~~he~~ it must give ~~his~~ its approval of the plan negotiated and must administer the plan agreed upon.

In Denmark the chief negotiator on the management side is personnel from the Ministry of Pensions and Wages. They bargain for salaries

but not fringe benefits. The Ministry of Pensions and Wages bargains directly with the teacher organizations and the organizations of other civil servants. The National School Boards Association does not participate in salary negotiations and the person carrying on the bargaining for the Ministry of Pensions and Wages believesthat the government is too much involved in the process and its consequences to permit it to be done outside the governmental structure. Thus, the processes of negotiations are essentially salary argreements which are worked out by representatives of all civil servants including teachers and the Ministry of Pensions and Wages. Fringe benefits are determined by boards in local school districts.

In negotiations an effort is made to keep increases in line with increased productivity in the private sector of the economy, which during recent years has been between five and six percent annually. In contrast with state-side negotiations, with its usual dissatisfactions, the teachers are generally satisfied with the agreed salary and feel the government has been quite fair in the agreements.

While the salary schedule decided upon is nationwide and no district is permitted to pay more, there are six different areas for adjustment for

for the cost of living for the more expensive areas. These are intended to be such that no teacher group has an economic advantage and any teacher may teach anywhere without economic penalty or premium. The wage adjustment for higher living costs ranges from 2½ to 15 percent above schedule. These adjustments are not applied at the highest salary levels. In addition, a cost-of-living adjustment of three percent is automatically applied when the cost of living has increased by three percent.

If the National Teachers Association is dissatisfied with the maximum amount offered in negotiation, it can and would go directly to parliament. If no solution can be obtained then the possibility of a strike would arise. However, there is considerable question as to whether a strike is legal in Denmark.

The equivalents of the principals and other educational administrators generally belong to the teacher organization and also have their own organization but they cooperate closely with the teachers. They <u>are not</u> on the management side of the table in any negotiation and, as a result, generate no animosity from this activity.

The quality of negotiation in the Scandinavian Countries seemed to be very high. The skill of persons selected for their expertise in this area and developed in spending virtually full time in the activity is in sharp contrast to that of teachers and school board members negotiating in the United States. In addition, the lack of personal involvement of the national level personnel permits a much more objective look at the propositions advanced. The fine relationship and camaraderie of the negotiators is in sharp contrast to the ill will often generated in negotiations in the United States.

What then are the possibilities of centralized or state-wide negotiation in the United States? How could it be organized?

First, based on my observation of centralized negotiation, I believe it has possibilities for state-wide negotiation. Since it is likely many problems would arise, I recommend that it be tried on an experimental basis in one or two states with any district having the option of joining in the state-wide negotiation or not as it determines. I would envision the operation somewhat as follows:

The teachers' organization would appoint a five or seven man bargaining team. This would be representative of all teachers and administrators for organizations in the schools which elected state-wide bargaining. The team would be required to bring in mutually agreed to propositions or proposals for consideration. The school boards would have an equal number of members on their team. Three members of the Department of Public Instruction (or education) would serve as resource persons to both sides in the negotiations. They would not vote on any proposition. In states with a very high level of state support, a state budget officer would also serve as a resource person. The agreed salary and fringe benefit package would then be approved by majority vote of the teacher team and by the school board team, each group counted separately. All agreements would be subject to approval by state-wide vote of the majority of teachers and the majority of school board members in all participating districts, counting votes of each group separately.

In my judgment, state-wide negotiation of salaries and fringe benefits is worth a try. My view of our present method of negotiation in the United States is that surely there is a better way. Other approaches should be tried.